



**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR PROPOSED CESSATION OF NAVY AND
MARINE CORPS TRAINING AT
VIEQUES NAVAL TRAINING RANGE
(VNTR)
Vieques, Puerto Rico**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFWTF	Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility	LIA	Live Impact Area
AOC	Areas of Concern	LUMP	Land Use Management Plan
AQCR	Air Quality Control Region	m	Meter
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare	MEC	Munitions and Explosives of Concern
ATG	Air-to-Ground	MIW	Mine Warfare
BOS	Base Operation Services	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CAA	Clean Air Act	NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAS	Close Air Support	NCW	Naval Coastal Warfare
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
COMPTUEX	Composite Training Unit Exercises	NMS	Noise Monitoring System
CSAR	Combat Search and Rescue	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
dB	Decibel	NSFS	Naval Surface Fire Support
DNER	Department of Natural and Environmental Resources	NSRR	Naval Station Roosevelt Roads
DNL	Day/Night Sound Level	OP-1	Observation Post-1
DOD	Department of Defense	OPNAVINST	Operations Naval Instruction
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior	PL	Public Law
DRMO	Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office	PREPA	Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority
DT&E	Development, Test, and Evaluation	PROA	Puerto Rico Operating Area
EA	Environmental Assessment	PRPB	Puerto Rico Planning Board
EBS	Environmental Baseline Survey	RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat	RFI	RCRA Facility Investigation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	ROC	Range Operating Center
EO	Executive Order	ROI	Region of Influence
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal	ROTHR	Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	SA	Supporting Arms
EQB	Environmental Quality Board	SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
ESA	Endangered Species Act	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
EWR	Electronic Warfare Range	SWMU	Solid Waste Management Unit
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact	ULT	Unit Level Training
ha	Hectare	USC	United States Code
IDTC	Interdeployment Training Cycle	USCB	United States Census Bureau
JTFEX	Joint Task Force Exercise	USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
kg	Kilogram	UTR	Underwater Tracking Range
km	Kilometer	UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
		VNTR	Vieques Naval Training Range

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed cessation of Navy and Marine Corps training on the Vieques Naval Training Range (VNTR) on the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. “Vieques Naval Training Range” is a term created by the U.S. Congress during the development of legislation regarding the continued use of Navy property on the island of Vieques. The VNTR includes Navy property that is commonly known as the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) Inner Range, which comprises approximately 14,500 acres (5,868 ha) on the eastern end of Vieques, including approximately 900 acres (364 ha) that make up the Live Impact Area (LIA), as well as the adjoining waters for 4 nautical miles (7.4 kilometers [km]) off the coast of the VNTR. AFWTF Headquarters, located at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR) on the main island of Puerto Rico, coordinates VNTR training activities and provides range support to VNTR. Various organizations at NSRR provide additional support to VNTR, including security, transportation, fire fighting, food service, ordnance disposal, and facility maintenance activities.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would cease Navy and Marine Corps training on VNTR. All Navy and Marine Corps training activities on the VNTR would be terminated. With the exception of the legislatively exempted facilities located on the western portion of Vieques (i.e., the Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar [ROTHR] site and the Monte Pirata communications site), all Navy facilities on Vieques would be closed. Facilities within the VNTR to be closed include:

- AFWTF buildings and structures associated with Observation Post-1 (OP-1) at Cerro Matias, including the helipad, communications buildings, storage buildings, ready magazines, and other facilities;
- facilities at Camp Garcia, including the Exchange, galley, barracks, maintenance buildings, storage facilities, fire department, 4,898-ft (1,493-meter [m]) airstrip, helicopter landing field, and other facilities;
- small arms ranges; and
- observation towers and security buildings located along the VNTR fenceline.

As part of the closure of the Navy facilities at the VNTR, the Navy would remove associated temporary structures and equipment for reuse or disposition. The Navy also would perform appropriate remediation of hazardous waste contamination and conduct response actions, as appropriate, to address munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) at VNTR, consistent with future use objectives as directed and required under public law to protect human health and ensure public safety. The Navy and the Department of Interior (DOI) would work closely to coordinate the land transfer ensuring that plans were in place for the identification, remediation as necessary, and security of all sensitive sites. Navy environmental remediation efforts would extend over a multi-year period.

The land and facilities of the VNTR would be transferred as designated by and in accordance with PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107, which directs “upon termination of Navy and

Marine Corps training operations on the island of Vieques, the Secretary of the Navy shall transfer, without reimbursement, to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Interior, (1) the Live Impact Area on the Island of Vieques; (2) all Department of Defense real properties on the eastern side of the island that are identified as Conservation Zones; and (3) all other Department of Defense real properties on the eastern side of the island.” Future land use of VNTR property would be determined by the DOI in accordance with PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107, which also directs the Secretary of Interior to administer the LIA “as a wilderness area under the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*) and deny public access to the area,” and to administer all remaining VNTR properties “as wildlife refuges under the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*) pending the enactment of a law that addresses the disposition of such properties.”

ALTERNATIVES

PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107, provides the SECNAV authority to determine the continued use of VNTR. The decision to be made by SECNAV is whether to continue use of VNTR and its exclusively related facilities on NSRR or to cease operations. Currently, the Navy trains at VNTR a maximum of 90 days per year using only non-explosive ordnance, which is the maximum level of training allowed on Vieques in accordance with the Presidential Directive issued on January 31, 2000. The SECNAV may decide to continue training at VNTR at current levels or to discontinue training at VNTR. Therefore, this EA considers only the proposed action (cessation of training at VNTR) and the no action (status quo) alternatives.

Under the no action alternative (status quo), the Navy would continue use of VNTR and exclusively related facilities on NSRR. Navy and Marine Corps training would continue at existing levels for a maximum of 90 exercise days per year as detailed in the *Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Continued Use With Non-Explosive Ordnance of the Vieques Inner Range to Include Training Operations Typical of Large Scale Exercises, Multiple Unit Level Training and/or a Combination of Large Scale Exercises and Multiple Unit Level Training* (US Navy, 2001a).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would have no significant impacts on the environment as summarized below:

Land Use and Socioeconomics. The proposed action could have a slight positive impact on the land use of Vieques by providing more public access to VNTR lands while maintaining protection of its natural resources as a wildlife refuge and a wilderness area. There would be a short-term decrease in employment resulting in the loss of 66 Navy civilian jobs on Vieques and the reassignment of 43 military personnel currently assigned to Vieques, which would result in an annual loss of approximately \$2,000,000 to the local economy. However, over the long-term, the proposed action could have positive impacts on the island’s economy resulting from increased tourism, which would contribute to sales, profits, jobs, tax revenue, and income on Vieques. Future growth and development of Vieques is expected to be moderated by the legislative requirements for use of the VNTR lands by DOI as a wildlife refuge and a wilderness

area, however, limited increases in permanent and seasonal populations on the island would be expected to occur. As growth occurs, there would be a slight increase in demand on the island's infrastructure, including transportation system, water and power supply, wastewater treatment and solid waste management facilities, communication systems, and community services and facilities.

Noise, Air Quality, Hydrology, and Water Quality. Under the proposed action, training activities would cease and there would be a decrease in noise levels at the VNTR. Likewise, no emissions from Navy activities would be added to the air quality environment. Additional tourist vehicles are anticipated in some areas of the VNTR, however, the limited increase is not expected to adversely impact air quality. Hydrology and water quality of Vieques would not be affected.

Terrestrial and Marine Resources, Threatened and Endangered Species, and Essential Fish Habitat. These resources would not be adversely affected by the proposed action. The DOI would assume administrative responsibility for the VNTR and would prepare a comprehensive management plan as required by the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C., 670h). DOI would administer the lands in accordance with the administrative requirements of the Wilderness Act (within the former LIA) and the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, both of which would require DOI to manage the land to conserve natural resources. Terrestrial and marine species would be afforded continued protection by a federal agency and there would be no adverse impacts on terrestrial or marine resources. There would be a slight positive impact from discontinued use of beaches for amphibious landings, however, disturbances of the shoreline during such operations is minimal during current training exercises. While the Navy has moved its targets further inland from the beaches to minimize the potential for inert ordnance landing in the waters surrounding the VNTR during current operations, there would also be a slight positive impact from discontinued air-to-ground (ATG) and naval surface fire support (NSFS) exercises and resultant elimination of potential for accidental water hits (inert ordnance falls or skips into the water) around the VNTR. Minor disturbance from Navy activities to coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds would no longer occur. There would be no effect on threatened or endangered species, and no adverse effects on essential fish habitat.

Cultural Resources. The proposed action would have no adverse effects on cultural resources. The transfer of land from one federal agency to another does not constitute an "undertaking" as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and would not require consultation by the Navy with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Sites that are listed/or potentially eligible for listing to the national register for historic places (NRHP) would fall under the management of DOI. As a federal agency, DOI would be obligated to protect and preserve these resources under the NHPA. The Navy would provide DOI with all of the surveys, studies, assessments, and management plans that the Navy has prepared regarding cultural resources on Vieques to assist DOI in the management of such resources.

Environmental Contamination. The proposed action would have no adverse impacts on public health and safety regarding environmental contamination. The Navy and DOI would work closely to coordinate the land transfer ensuring that plans were in place for the identification,

remediation as necessary, and security of all sensitive sites. The Navy would perform appropriate remediation of hazardous waste contamination and conduct response actions, as appropriate, to address munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) at VNTR, consistent with future use objectives as directed and required under public law to protect human health and ensure public safety. Because the Navy would have permanent responsibility for remediation and munitions response actions and public access would be prohibited from the LIA, it is anticipated that the proposed action would have no adverse impacts on public health and safety regarding environmental contamination.

Environmental Justice/Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks. The proposed action would not result in additional health risks to low-income populations or to children. DOI would take administrative control of the property and develop a comprehensive management plan consistent with wildlife refuge and wilderness area missions. As required by PL 107-107, the LIA would be designated a wilderness area and all public access would be prohibited. However, public access to the wildlife refuge may occur in accordance with DOI's management plan. Therefore, the Navy would coordinate with DOI to identify appropriate land use to reduce health risks from hazardous waste contamination and the explosives safety hazards posed by UXO located on the VNTR. As appropriate, the Navy would remediate hazardous waste contamination and perform munitions response for UXO on the VNTR to protect public health and safety.

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed cessation of Navy and Marine Corps training on the Vieques Naval Training Range (VNTR) on the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. “Vieques Naval Training Range” is a term created by the U.S. Congress during the development of legislation regarding the continued use of Navy property on the island of Vieques. The VNTR includes Navy property that is commonly known as the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) Inner Range, which comprises approximately 14,500 acres (5,874 ha) on the eastern end of Vieques, including approximately 900 acres (364 ha) that make up the Live Impact Area (LIA), as well as the adjoining waters for 4 nautical miles (7.4 kilometers [km]) off the coast of the VNTR. AFWTF Headquarters, located at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR) on the main island of Puerto Rico, coordinates VNTR training activities and provides range support to VNTR. Various organizations at NSRR provide additional support to VNTR, including security, transportation, fire fighting, food service, ordnance disposal, and facility maintenance activities.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The VNTR is a component of the AFWTF training complex in the Puerto Rico Operating Area (PROA). AFWTF is a command whose mission is to operate, maintain, and develop weapons training facilities and services in direct support of the training of the fleet forces and other activities and for the development, test, and evaluation of weapons systems. The AFWTF complex is a large scale training complex serving as one of the Atlantic Fleet’s major training grounds for ensuring the combat readiness of the Atlantic Forces. AFWTF consists of four separate ranges that are specially equipped with targetry, instrumentation, sensors, communications, and facilities to evaluate a specific category of naval weapons systems, whether surface, underwater, or airborne. The four components of AFWTF include the VNTR, Outer Range, Underwater Tracking Range (UTR), and Electronic Warfare Range (EWR). Figure 1-1 illustrates the location of the ranges, with the exception of the EWR, which is actually a compilation of electronics equipment located throughout the PROA. Each component of the AFWTF complex, including the VNTR, is described below.

The VNTR is located on the eastern portion of the Island of Vieques (Figure 1-2). It provides approximately 10,328 acres [4,190 ha] of ground maneuvering areas as well as multi-purpose ranges, including the naval surface fire support (NSFS) target range, supporting arms (SA)/amphibious operations range, and air-to-ground (ATG) target range. Practice (inert) minefields are also located north and south of the island within the waters that extend 4 nautical miles [7.4 km] from the shoreline. VNTR range operations are controlled from Observation Post-1 (OP-1) located on top of Cerro Matias. All ordnance impact areas (non-explosive) for NSFS and ATG exercises occur in the 900-acre [364 ha] LIA. Small arms ordnance training occurs in small arms ranges located throughout the maneuvering areas. Camp Garcia, located in the maneuvering area, provides support for training exercises, including food service, security, facility maintenance, and fire protection.

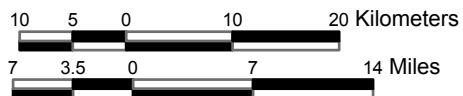
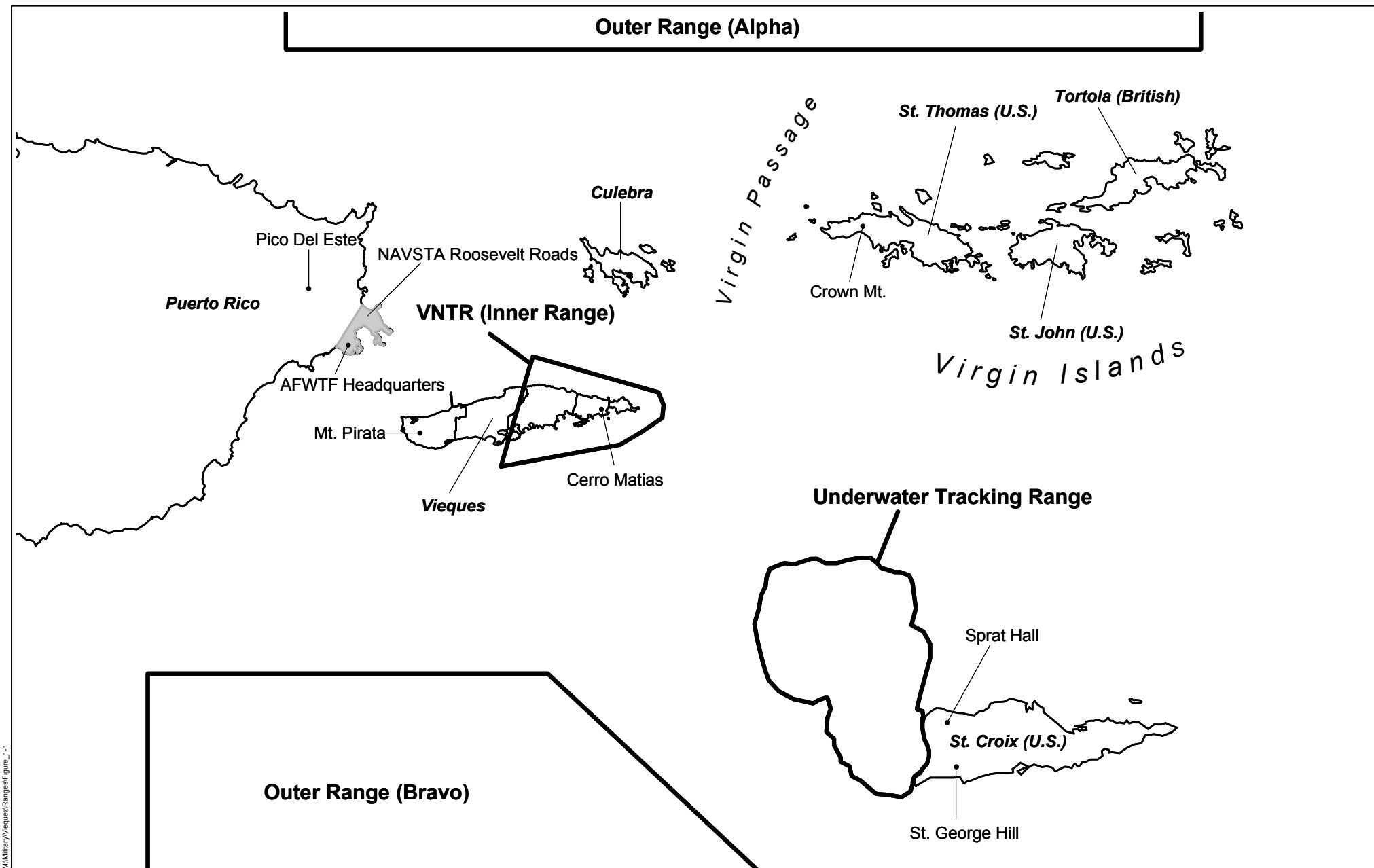


Figure 1-1
AFWTF Ranges



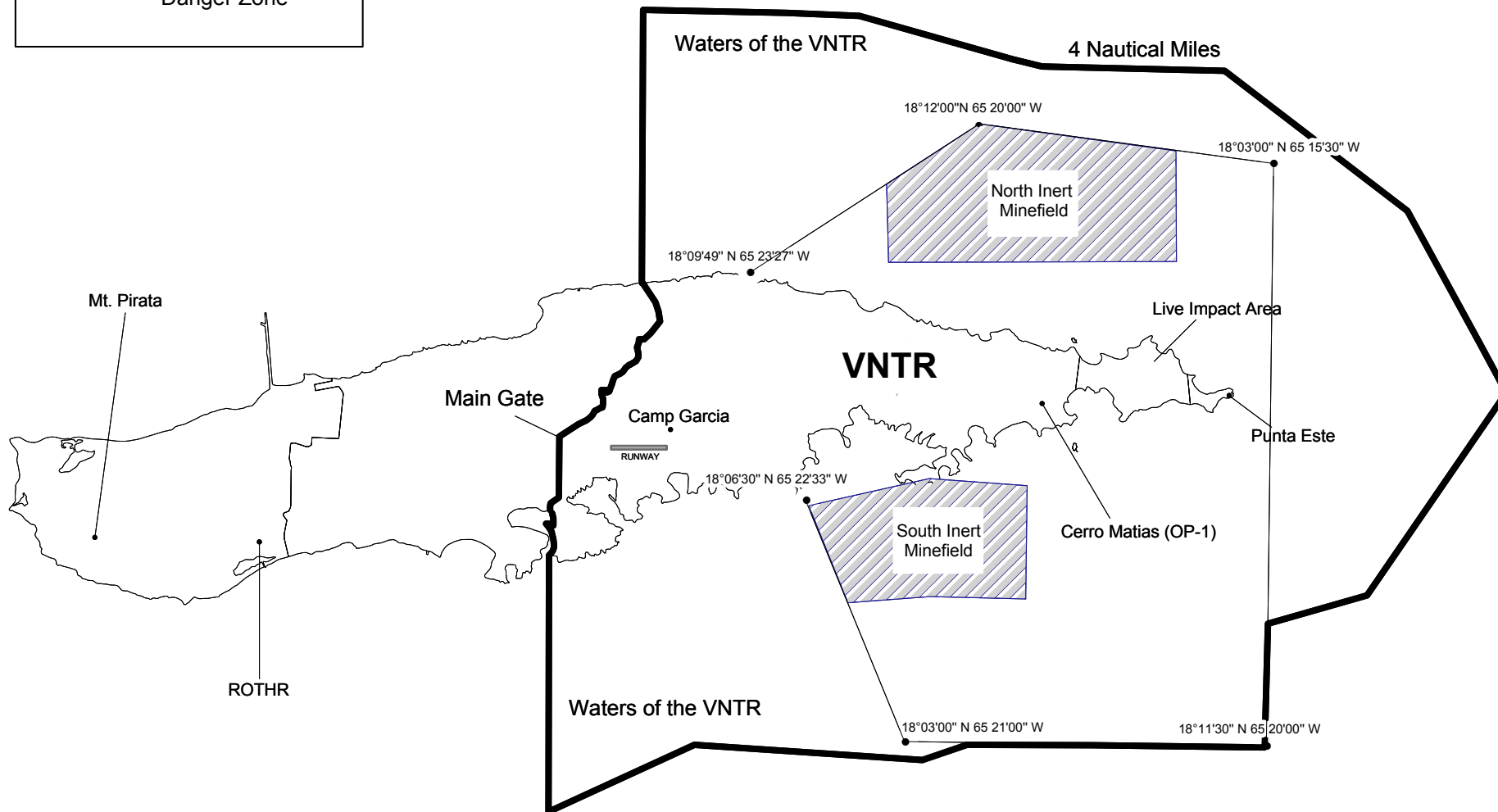
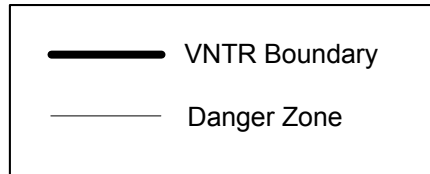


Figure 1-2
Vieques Naval Training Range



The Outer Range consists of two large areas of open water to the northeast and southeast of Puerto Rico encompassing an area of about 200,000 square miles [321,869 square km]. The northern portion of the Outer Range is designated as Alpha Range and the southern portion is designated as Bravo Range. The large size of these range areas permits fleet exercises and weapons firing against airborne and surface targets. Fleet maneuvers are conducted involving surface-to-air, air-to-air, air-to-surface, and surface-to-surface missile firings.

The Underwater Tracking Range (UTR) includes an underwater acoustic tracking range located in the deep waters off St. Croix. The UTR is primarily used for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercises, and may involve submarine, surface, or air units. The range is also used for testing and evaluation of sonars and deep submersibles. A range operations control complex for the UTR is located near Sprat Hall, St. Croix and is used for command and control of operations of the range. Approximately 450 square miles [724 square km] of the range is equipped with a three dimensional acoustic tracking system that provides positional data for objects within the UTR. Radar tracking of surface and airborne objects is provided using radars installed at St. George Hill (St. Croix), Crown Mountain (St. Thomas), and Cerro Matias (Vieques).

The Electronic Warfare Range (EWR) consists of various threat simulators located at Pico del Este (Puerto Rico), Mt. Pirata (Vieques), and St. George Hill (St. Croix) that are controlled from AFWTF Headquarters at NSRR. The EWR is not actually a separate range, rather, the radar simulators are co-located with other AFWTF assets and provide coverage to a portion of the Outer Range and all of the VNTR and UTR. The EWR simulators create an area where Fleet users can experience what it is like to be tracked and targeted by equipment designed to work like enemy equipment. The mission is carried out by simulating real world scenarios tailored to specific geographic regions. In addition, the EWR supports development, test and evaluation (DT&E) of new electronic warfare systems.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Under existing statutory provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law (PL) 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107), the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) has the discretion to determine the continued use of VNTR and all of its exclusively related facilities on NSRR (Appendix A).

If SECNAV makes a determination to close VNTR and all of its exclusively related facilities, the current legislation provides specific direction on what operations to terminate and what facilities to close. The legislation directs that if a determination is made to close the VNTR, the Navy shall:

- “terminate all Navy and Marine Corps training operations on the Island of Vieques;”
- “terminate all Navy and Marine Corps operations at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, that are related exclusively to the use of the training range on the island of Vieques by the Navy and Marine Corps;” and
- “close the Navy installations and facilities on the island of Vieques, other than properties exempt from conveyance and transfer” (i.e., the relocatable over the horizon radar [ROTHR] site and Monte Pirata telecommunications site).

In making the decision on the continued use of VNTR, SECNAV needs to know the environmental impacts of such a decision as it relates to the VNTR and all of its exclusively related facilities on NSRR.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE EA

This EA examines the direct impacts of the cessation of training and closures contemplated by PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107. In addressing the environmental consequences of the proposed action, the reuse of the VNTR is discussed and the impacts evaluated based on the Congressionally directed transfer of VNTR lands to the Department of Interior (DOI) for future administration by DOI as wildlife refuges and a wilderness area. The impacts associated with the administration of the lands as wildlife refuges and a wilderness area are discussed in this EA only in general terms because at this point in time, they are not susceptible to meaningful analysis. DOI is required by the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C., 670h) to develop a comprehensive management plan for conservation of the VNTR lands. The potential impacts of such management would be analyzed by DOI at the time they propose the development of such a plan.

The scope of this EA also does not include the analysis of indirect impacts associated with the relocation of training activities that currently occur at the VNTR, because those impacts are not susceptible to meaningful analysis at this point in time. The evolution in naval warfare training has prompted the Navy to reevaluate its training requirements and methodologies, which could, in turn, affect where and how training is conducted. When a proposal for creating, enhancing, or modifying a range or training facility is developed by the Navy, the potential impacts of such a proposal will be analyzed for that range or facility in separate documentation, as appropriate.

1.5 RELEVANT ISSUES

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and Navy procedures for implementing NEPA specify that an EA should address only those resource areas potentially subject to impacts. In addition, the level of analysis should be commensurate with the anticipated level of environmental impact. The following resource areas are most relevant to the proposed cessation of Navy and Marine Corps training on VNTR and are evaluated in this EA:

- Land use;
- Socioeconomics;
- Noise;
- Air quality;
- Hydrology and water quality;
- Terrestrial environment;
- Marine environment;
- Essential fish habitat;
- Threatened and endangered species;
- Cultural resources;
- Environmental contamination; and
- Environmental justice/protection of children from environmental health risks.

1.6 COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

This EA has been prepared in accordance with all applicable federal regulations and instructions, as well as with other applicable laws, ordinances, rules, and policies. These include, but are not limited to:

- NEPA of 1969 as amended by PL 94-52, July 3, 1975 and PL 94-83, August 9, 1975 (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 *et seq.*), which requires environmental analyses for major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment;
- CEQ requirements in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1500-1508, which implement NEPA;
- Department of the Navy procedures for implementing NEPA, 32 CFR 775 and U.S. Navy *Environmental and Natural Resources Program Manual* (OPNAVINST 5090.1B, CH-2, as amended), which outline the Navy's operational procedures on how to implement the provisions of NEPA.

NEPA requires that federal agencies consider potential environmental consequences of proposed actions in their decision-making process. The intent of NEPA is to protect, restore, or enhance the environment through well-informed federal decisions. The CEQ was established under NEPA for the purpose of implementing and overseeing federal policies as they relate to this process. In 1978, the CEQ issued *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act* (40 CFR §1500-1508). These regulations specify that an EA be prepared to:

- briefly provide sufficient analysis and evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI);
- aid in an agency's compliance with NEPA when an EIS is deemed unnecessary; and
- facilitate EIS preparation when one is necessary.

This EA will be reviewed and a determination will be made as to whether a FONSI or an EIS is appropriate. Should it be concluded that a FONSI is appropriate, one will be prepared that summarizes the issues presented. It will be signed by the FONSI Authority and a notice to that effect will be published in Spanish and English in newspapers having a general circulation in the vicinity of the proposed action. Conversely, should it be determined that the proposed action may have a significant impact on the environment, the Navy will publish a notice of its intent to prepare an EIS, and an EIS will be prepared and filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and distributed to cognizant federal, Commonwealth, local, and private agencies and organizations and individuals for review and comment.

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107, provides the SECNAV authority to determine the continued use of VNTR. The decision to be made by SECNAV is whether to continue use of VNTR and its exclusively related facilities on NSRR or to cease operations. Currently, the Navy trains at VNTR a maximum of 90 days per year using only non-explosive ordnance, which is the maximum level of training allowed on Vieques in accordance with the Presidential Directive issued on January 31, 2000 (Appendix B). The SECNAV may decide to continue training at VNTR at current levels or to discontinue training at VNTR. Therefore, this EA considers only the proposed action (cessation of training at VNTR) and the no action (status quo) alternatives.

2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (STATUS QUO)

Under the no action alternative, the Navy would continue use of VNTR and exclusively related facilities on NSRR. The potential environmental impacts of the Navy's training activities on Vieques were thoroughly evaluated and documented in the *Environmental Impact Statement for Continued Use of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility, Inner Range (Vieques)* (US Navy 1980). In 1986, the *Environmental Assessment for Continued Use of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility, Vieques, Puerto Rico* (US Navy 1986b) updated/supplemented the 1980 EIS to evaluate the immediate short-term and long-term impacts of continued naval activities. Following the issuance of a Presidential Directive on January 31, 2000 that changed some aspects of how the Navy conducts training operations at Vieques, the Navy prepared the *Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Continued Use With Non-Explosive Ordnance of the Vieques Inner Range to Include Training Operations Typical of Large Scale Exercises, Multiple Unit Level Training and/or a Combination of Large Scale Exercises and Multiple Unit Level Training* (US Navy 2001a) which evaluated the current level and types of training that occur today on Vieques. In addition, the Navy prepared the *Supplement to the Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Continued Use With Non-Explosive Ordnance of the Vieques Inner Range to Include Training Operations Typical of Large Scale Exercises, Multiple Unit Level Training and/or a Combination of Large Scale Exercises and Multiple Unit Level Training* (US Navy 2002a). The 2002 Supplement addressed the same level and type of training evaluated in the 2001 Programmatic EA and discussed relevant information emerging since February 2001 when the Programmatic EA was published. The continued training at the VNTR that would occur as part of the no action alternative is the same level and type that was evaluated in the 2001 Programmatic EA and the 2002 Supplement to the Programmatic EA.

Under the no action alternative, Navy and Marine Corps training would continue at existing levels for a maximum of 90 exercise days per year as detailed in the 2001 Programmatic EA (US Navy 2001a, pp 1-3 through 1-11). As described in the Programmatic EA, continued operations would include the following training activities at VNTR: air, sea, and land maneuver warfare, ATG bombing and strafing, amphibious landings, artillery, close air support (CAS), combat search and rescue (CSAR), mine warfare (MIW), naval surface fire support (NSFS), naval coastal warfare (NCW), small arms training, and special operations training. Various combinations of these training activities provide required operational and tactical training such as

unit level training (ULT), composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX), and joint task force exercise (JTFEX).

Under the no action alternative, various organizations on NSRR would continue to provide support for continued training at VNTR. Table 2-1 summarizes support that is provided exclusively for operation of VNTR.

Table 2-1. Summary of Organizations Providing Exclusively Related Support of VNTR

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Description</i>
Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility	AFWTF supports VNTR with 5 military personnel from AFWTF Headquarters primarily for VNTR exercise scheduling and coordination. AFWTF also has a contract that provides 39 contractor personnel (4 at AFWTF Headquarters, 33 at VNTR, and 2 on Culebra) primarily for range, facility, and equipment maintenance.
Construction Battalion Unit, Detachment Roosevelt Roads (Seabees)	The Construction Battalion Unit Detachment at NSRR provides an average of 9 military engineers and technicians for road, fence, and other facility repair and maintenance. During exercises, additional personnel are assigned to VNTR to provide rapid response for fence, road, and facility repair.
Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Mobile Unit 2, Detachment Roosevelt Roads	The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), Mobile Unit 2, Detachment Roosevelt Roads provides 6 military EOD technicians to perform surface sweeps of all roads at VNTR for a six-week period, twice per year. In addition, the EOD Detachment provides 6 EOD technicians to escort security personnel for the duration of training exercises.
Naval Station Roosevelt Roads	NSRR provides cooks (7 military) and food service attendants (6 non-appropriated fund employees) for food service at Camp Garcia. One corpsman is assigned to Camp Garcia to provide medical treatment. Ten firefighters (civilian employees) from the NSRR Fire Department are assigned to the Vieques Detachment located at Camp Garcia, and 5 additional civilian employees provide public works support. NSRR contracts also provide 12 contract positions for pest management and grounds maintenance.
Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Naval Security Force	The NSRR Naval Security Force provides 15 military security personnel for routine security activities at VNTR. During exercises, an additional 60 NSRR Naval Security Force personnel and 200-300 security personnel from other organizations (DOD and U.S. Marshals) are assigned to VNTR duty for the duration of the exercises.

As summarized in Table 2-1, AFWTF would continue to operate and support VNTR, including range administration, scheduling, and coordination; range operation and maintenance; target control and maintenance; electronics maintenance; and facilities maintenance. This support includes both military and contractor personnel working at AFWTF Headquarters on NSRR and other AFWTF facilities located on Vieques. The Construction Battalion Unit Detachment at

NSRR would continue to provide construction and repair support to VNTR, including road maintenance, fence repair, and other facility maintenance activities. EOD support would continue to be provided for routine surface sweeps and escort activities during exercises. The NSRR Naval Security Force would continue to provide security of VNTR at routine and exercise levels. In addition, NSRR would continue to provide other support services to VNTR including pest control and grounds maintenance, food service, fire fighting, and ferry service to the island. These services are provided by full-time and part-time civilian and contract employees.

2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is the cessation of Navy and Marine Corps training on VNTR. Under the proposed action, all Navy and Marine Corps training activities on VNTR as described in Section 2.1 would be terminated. As a result of the proposed action, Navy lands on Vieques would be closed and transferred to DOI in accordance with PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107.

With the exception of the legislatively exempted facilities located on the western portion of Vieques (i.e., the Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar [ROTHR] site and the Monte Pirata communications site), all Navy facilities on Vieques would be closed. Facilities within the VNTR to be closed include:

- AFWTF buildings and structures associated with OP-1 at Cerro Matias, including the helipad, communications buildings, storage buildings, ready magazines, and other facilities;
- facilities at Camp Garcia, including the Exchange, galley, barracks, maintenance buildings, storage facilities, fire department, 4,898-ft (1,493-meter [m]) airstrip, helicopter landing field, and other facilities;
- small arms ranges; and
- observation towers and security buildings located along the VNTR fenceline.

As part of the closure of the Navy facilities at the VNTR, the Navy would remove associated temporary structures and equipment for reuse or disposition. The Navy also would perform appropriate remediation of hazardous waste contamination and conduct response actions, as appropriate, to address munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) at VNTR, consistent with future use objectives as directed and required under public law to protect human health and ensure public safety. The Navy and the Department of Interior (DOI) would work closely to coordinate the land transfer ensuring that plans were in place for the identification, remediation as necessary, and security of all sensitive sites. Navy environmental remediation efforts would extend over a multi-year period.

The land and facilities of the VNTR would be transferred as designated by and in accordance with PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107, which directs “upon termination of Navy and Marine Corps training operations on the island of Vieques, the Secretary of the Navy shall transfer, without reimbursement, to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Interior, (1) the Live Impact Area on the Island of Vieques; (2) all Department of Defense real properties on the eastern side of the island that are identified as Conservation Zones; and (3) all other Department of Defense real properties on the eastern side of the island.” Future land use of VNTR property would be determined by the DOI in accordance with PL 106-398, as amended by PL 107-107, which also directs the Secretary of Interior to administer the LIA “as a

wilderness area under the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*) and deny public access to the area,” and to administer all remaining VNTR properties “as wildlife refuges under the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*) pending the enactment of a law that addresses the disposition of such properties.”

In addition, Navy operations that are related exclusively to the use of VNTR would also be terminated. In Vieques, this includes contract support for VNTR range management, target control, target maintenance, electronics maintenance, facilities maintenance, and noise monitoring. Operations at NSRR that are related exclusively to the use of VNTR, generally are provided by organizations that also support other non-VNTR activities, as well. Thus, the complete termination of NSRR organizations or closure of NSRR facilities would not occur as part of the proposed action. AFWTF would discontinue all support of VNTR. On NSRR, this includes support by AFWTF Headquarters, including VNTR range administration, scheduling, coordination, and target control activities. VNTR scheduling and coordination is performed by military personnel who spend 100 percent of their time on Vieques during exercises and the remainder of their time at AFWTF Headquarters. Construction and repair support of VNTR provided by the Construction Battalion Detachment at NSRR would be terminated. The Seabees that are required for support of VNTR activities would be reassigned to new duties. EOD support for VNTR provided by the EOD Mobile Unit 2 Detachment at NSRR would be discontinued. The EOD personnel that currently provide such support for VNTR would be reassigned to new duties. The NSRR Naval Security Force that provides security for VNTR would be reassigned to other duties on NSRR. Other support provided by NSRR that would be terminated includes pest control and grounds maintenance provided under NSRR Base Operation Services (BOS) contracts; food services provided for the Camp Garcia mess hall; fire fighters for the Navy fire department on Vieques; and contract ferry service to the island.